

DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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DECOY OPERATION NETS EIGHT ARRESTS IN FORT BRAGG

Investigators from the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) arrested eight people in an undercover operation targeting sales of alcoholic beverages to minors in the community of Fort Bragg.

Utilizing a grant through the California Office of Traffic Safety, ABC created the Minor Decoy programs to reduce alcohol availability to minors. In the Minor Decoy program a decoy enters retail establishments and attempts to purchase alcohol. Of the twelve retail businesses the decoy entered in Fort Bragg, eight clerks sold to the decoy.

The penalty for selling or furnishing alcohol to a minor is a minimum \$250 fine and 24 hours of community service.

ABC will continue to conduct minor decoy operations in Mendocino County and Fort Bragg.

Minor Decoy operations have been conducted by local law enforcement throughout the state since the 1980's. When the program first began, the violation rate of retail establishments selling to minors was as high as 40 to 50 percent. When conducted on a routine basis, the rate has dropped in some cities as low as 10 percent or even below. The latest violation rate state-wide is almost 24 percent, or nearly one in five retail licensees selling to minors.

In 1994, the California Supreme Court ruled unanimously that use of underage decoys is a valid tool of law enforcement to ensure that liquor licensees are complying with the law.

Funding for this program was provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency.

ABC is a department of the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency, which is under the direction of Secretary Sunne Wright McPeak, a member of the Governor's